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THE

# HAIDAH INDIANS

OF

# QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S ISLANDS, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

WITH A

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THEIR CARVINGS, TATTOO DESIGNS, ETC.

BY

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Memoir was referred for examination to Dr. James C. Welling, LL.D., President of Columbian University, Washington, D. C., and to Dr. George A. Otis, of the Surgeon General's Office, U. S. Army.

Their report states that "the Memoir is a valuable contribution to our general knowledge of anthropology and archæology, while yielding besides a special contingent to the ethnology of the North American continent. Under the latter of these heads it raises some questions which seem of great significance, and which it is to be hoped will lead to further investigation."

JOSEPH HENRY,
*Secretary S. I.*

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,
Washington, July, 1874.

# THE HAIDAH INDIANS OF QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S ISLANDS.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S ISLANDS are a group in the Pacific Ocean, lying off the northwest coast of North America about seventy-five miles northwest of Vancouver's Island, between latitude 51° 30′ and 54° 20′ north, and at a distance from the mainland varying from one hundred miles at their southern extremity to about sixty miles at the northern portion of the group.

They were first discovered by Captain Cook, R. N., in the year 1776, and it is said that he landed on the most northerly portion near a spot now known as Cook's Inlet. Captain Juan Perez, a Spanish navigator, had sighted this land two years previously, but it was not taken formal possession of by either the English or Spanish until 1787, when Captain Dixon took possession in the name of King George the Third, and named the group after the consort of the King, "Queen Charlotte's Islands."

These Islands form together a healthy picturesque territory, rich in natural resources, and well adapted to colonization. Nevertheless, for the space of nearly a century no attempt has been made by the English to colonize them. There they lie waste and fallow, yet marvellously productive, and awaiting nothing but capital, enterprise, and skill to return manifold profit to those who will develop their resources.

The names of this group are North, Graham's, Moresby's, and Prevost.

Graham's and Moresby's Islands are the largest, and constitute at least 95 per cent. of the whole area of the group.

North and Prevost Islands, one at the extreme northwest, and the other at the extreme southeast of the group, are quite small, being only a few miles in area.

There are a great number of small islands and islets around the main group, particularly on the eastern side. Some of these islets are of considerable extent, but are of minor importance when compared with the main group.

The general direction of Queen Charlotte's Islands is northwest and southeast, following the general outline of the coast in that region of the continent.

The widest portion is at the northern end of Graham's Island, a little north of the 54° parallel, and measures, from Cape Fife on the east, to Cape Knox on the west, about sixty nautical miles.

From the 54° parallel the group narrows towards its southern extremity till it is reduced, at Prevost Island, to about one mile.

The whole length of the group from North Point to Cape St. James, its southern extremity, is about one hundred and sixty miles. The islands of the group are separated by three channels. Parry Passage, at the north, separates North Island from Graham's, Skidegate Channel separates Graham's and Moresby's Islands, and Stewart Channel separates Moresby's and Prevost Islands.

These Islands are inhabited by a tribe of Indians called Haida or Hydah, who in manners and customs seem somewhat different from the neighboring tribes of the mainland, and those of Vancouver's Island. The name is spelled Hyder, Haida, or Haidah. I have adopted the latter style as it is more expressive of the true pronunciation of the natives.

In general appearance the Haidahs resemble the natives of the northeastern coast of Asia, who have a marked resemblance to the Tartar hordes and who seem to have extended along the Siberian coast, the Aleutian Islands, and down the American shores as far south as Queen Charlotte's Islands, where this peculiar type of the Indian race ceases, and is succeeded immediately by the Selish or flat-head branch of the North American Indians, who have been classed by Morgan as the Ganowanian family or Bow and Arrow people. I apply the term *Selish* in this paper to the tribes of Washington Territory and British Columbia south of the 51° parallel of north latitude.

The distinctive features of these two classes of Indians are apparent to the most casual observer. The Haidah, Chimsean, and other tribes north of Vancouver's Island, who are termed by the residents of Puget Sound "Northern Indians," are, as a general rule, of larger stature, better proportion, and lighter complexion than the Selish.

Although there are numerous instances of well-developed individuals among the Vancouver Island tribes, and of small-sized individuals among the Northern, yet the general appearance of the Northern Indians, both men and women, is much larger and finer. This difference is particularly marked in the females. Those of the Haidah and other northern tribes are tall and athletic, while the Selish women are shorter and more given to corpulency.

The Haidah Indians, living on an island separated from the mainland by a wide and stormy strait, are necessarily obliged to resort to canoes as a means of travel, and are exceedingly expert in their construction and management.

Some of their canoes are very large and capable of carrying one hundred persons with all their equipments for a long voyage. But those generally used will carry from twenty to thirty persons; and in these conveyances they make voyages of several hundred miles to Victoria on Vancouver's Island, and from thence to the various towns on Puget Sound.

These canoes are made from single logs of cedar, which attains an immense size on Queen Charlotte's Islands. Although not so graceful in model as the canoes of the west coast of Vancouver's Island and Washington Territory, which are commonly called Chenook canoes, yet they are most excellent sea boats, and capable of being navigated with perfect safety through the storms and turbulent waters of the northwest coast.

The Haidahs bring with them as articles of traffic, furs of various kinds, dogfish, and seal oil, and carvings in wood and stone, as well as ornaments in silver of excellent workmanship, such as bracelets, finger-rings, and ear ornaments.

A peculiar kind of slate-stone is found on Queen Charlotte's Islands, very soft when first quarried, and easily carved into fanciful figures of various kinds, but growing very hard upon exposure to the air, and after being rubbed with oil, which seems to harden and polish it.

These stone carvings are eagerly purchased by persons looking for Indian curiosities, and are generally regarded by casual observers as idols, or objects of worship, or indicative in some manner of their secret or mystic rites. This, however, is an error. None of the tribes of the northwest coast worship idols or any visible symbol of their secret religion, which is confined to the totem, or tomanawas, or guardian spirit of each individual Indian.

But the custom which prevails among them, and seems to be a distinctive feature of this tribe, is that of tattooing their bodies with various designs, all of which are fanciful representations of animals, birds or fishes, either an attempt to represent in a grotesque form those which are known and commonly seen, or their mythological and legendary creations. A recent visit of a party of these Indians to Port Townsend has enabled me to study carefully a variety of their carvings and tattoo marks, and to ascertain with accuracy their true meaning and signification.

I have forwarded to the Smithsonian Institution, to accompany this memoir, several carvings in wood and stone; and, in order the better to describe them, I have made sketches illustrative of these carvings and also of various tattoo designs, which were copied by me from the persons of the Indians, and also have caused photographs to be taken to still further illustrate this subject.

The first of these carvings which I shall describe is of wood (Plate 2, fig. 1). It is intended to represent one of the carved posts or pillars which are raised in front of the houses of the chiefs or principal men. These pillars are sometimes from fifty to sixty feet high, elaborately carved at a cost of hundreds of blankets; some of the best ones even costing several thousand dollars, consequently, only the most wealthy individuals of the tribe are able to purchase the best specimens.

These pillars are carved out of a single cedar tree, the back hollowed out so as to relieve the weight when raising it in a perpendicular position. They are deeply and firmly set in the earth directly in front of the lodge, and a circular opening near the ground constitutes the door of entrance to the house. The Chimsean Indians, at Fort Simpson, and the Sitka tribes have this style of carved posts, but they set them a short distance from the front of their houses.

The figures carved on these posts are the family totems or heraldic designs of the family occupying the house, and as these Indians build large wooden lodges capable of containing several families, the carvings may be said to indicate the family names of the different occupants.

The chief or head man owns the house, and the occupants are his family and relatives, each one of whom will have on some part of the body a representation in tattooing of the particular figure which constitutes his or her family name or connection.

The chief will have all the figures tattooed on his body to show his connection with the whole.

The principal portion of the body tattooed is the back of the hand and forearm; and a Haidah, particularly the women, can be readily designated from any other northern tribe by this peculiarity.

The carving which I shall next describe is the wooden figure on the left of Sketch No. 2. This has four figures, one above the other. The lowest one is the beaver *Tsching*. On his head sits the mythological mother of the Haidah tribe, who is named *Itl-tads-dah*. In her arms she holds the young crow *Keet-kie*, and on her head is seated the crow *Hoo-yéh*, bearing in his beak the new moon *Koong*. His head is surmounted by the *Tadn-skillik*, a peculiar shaped hat worn only by chiefs or persons of importance. On the top of the *Tadn-skillik* is seated the bear *Hoorts*.

The legend connected with this carving is, that the beaver *Tsching* occupies himself by eating the moon, and when he has finished his meal and obliterated it. *Itl-tads-dah* sends out *Hoo-yéh*, the crow, to hunt for a new moon which he brings home in his bill. The duty of *Hoorts* the bear is to keep watch that all goes on well.

The second carving is of stone (Plate 1, fig. 1), and consists of *Tsching* the beaver, *Skams-kwin* the eagle, and *Itl-tads-dah* the grandmother. In the under lip of the old woman is seen the *staie*, an oblong piece of wood or ivory which is inserted in the under lip, and increased in size till the lip is distorted and stretched out of all shape.

This practice was formerly universal, but of late years has fallen somewhat into disuse, particularly with those females who have visited Victoria and seen the customs of civilization.

Carving No. 2 is of stone, and represents two figures, the lower one is *Hoorts* the bear holding in his paws the *Stoo* or crayfish. The upper figure is the *Tsching* or *Tsing*, the beaver, holding the *Tl-kam-kostan* or frog in his paws.

The Indian, however rude or grotesque his carvings or paintings may be, is always true to nature. He knows that the bears eat crabs, crayfish, and other littoral marine crustacea, and that the frog is the fresh-water companion of the beaver. Hence, if the carver had reversed the grouping, he would have been laughed at by his friends, for the Indians are keen critics of each other's work, and prone to ridicule.

Stone carving No. 3 represents three figures. The lower one is the *Tahn* or sea-lion; on his head is the *Wasko*, a mythological animal of the wolf species similar to the *Chu-chu-hu-uxl* of the Makah Indians. Above the *Wasko* is the bear, surmounted by a head resembling a human head, but intended to represent the young bear.

The other stone carving (Plate 5, No. 5) is unfinished. It represents two figures: the lower one, the bear, and the upper one, the *Scana* or killer (*Orca ater*).

With the exception of the first-named carving, I did not learn of any legend or allegorical history connected with these carvings of the Haidahs. But they will be of interest and value to study at some future opportunity.

The drawings of tattoo designs which accompany the carvings were copied by me from the persons of the Indians who came to my office for that purpose.

The first one (Plate 4, fig. 1) is the *Kahatta* or codfish. This was tattooed on the breast of Kitkūn, a chief of the Laskeek village of Haidahs, on the east side of Moresby's Island.

*Kitkūn* and his brother Ḡenés-kelos—a carver and tattooer—*Kit-kā-gens*, one of the head men of the band, and Captain Skedance, chief of the Koona village, with their party gave me the information and descriptions, and from their persons I made the drawings.

Fig. 2 (tattoo mark) is the *Oolala*, a mythological being, half man, half bird, similar in all respects to the Thunder bird of the Makah Indians. It lives on high mountains enveloped in clouds and mist, causing the loud thunder and sharp lightning, and destructive alike to man or beast.

Fig. 3 (Plate 4) is called *Wásko*, another mythological being of the antediluvian age. This represents the ancestors of the present race of wolves. It is similar to the *Chu-chu-hu-uxl* of the Makahs, and the tradition is, that after the primitive race had produced the present genus of wolf, the Wasko were transformed into the killer (*orca ater*). The sharp teeth and powerful jaws of the killer, resembling more the mouth of a carnivorous land animal than any of the inhabitants of the water, was undoubtedly the origin of the fable.

Scammon, in his Cetacea of the Northwest Coast, styles them the cannibals of the whale tribe. The *Wasko*, as I have copied it, was tattooed on the back of the chief *Kitkūn*.

Fig. 4 (Plate 4) is the *Scana* or killer (*Orca ater*).

Fig. 5 is the *Koone* or whale.

Plate 5, Fig. 6, is the *Tl-kam-kostan* or frog.

Fig. 7 is the *Thlama* or skate.

Fig. 8, *mama-thlom-tona* or humming bird.

Plate 3, Fig. 9, is the fish eagle (*Koot*). This drawing was made by Ḡeneskelos, the painter and tattooer of the tribe.

Plate 6, Fig. 10, is the *Chimose* or *Tchimose*, a fabulous animal supposed to drift about in the ocean like a log of wood, floating perpendicularly, and believed by the Haidahs to be very destructive to canoes or to Indians who may fall into its clutches. The *tahdn-skillik* or hat shown in the drawing indicates this animal to belong to the genii or more powerful of these mythological beings.

Fig. 11 is the crow, *Hooyeh*. This is sometimes drawn with a double head.

Fig. 12 is the bear, *Hoorts*.

Fig. 13 is a young skate, the *Billachie* of the Makahs and the *Cheetka* of the Haidahs. The young skate has on each side of its body an elliptical brown spot surrounded by a ring of bright yellow, and a brown ring outside of all. As the skate grows large this spot disappears. I have noticed it only on very small ones, and the Haidahs informed me that it is from this peculiar spot that they got their elliptical designs, which are to be seen in many of their paintings, and particularly in Fig. 12.

Figs. 14, 15, and 16 (Plate 7), representing the *Skamsom* or thunder bird, squid

(*octopus*), *noo*, and the frog, *Tl-kam-kostan*, were copied from the tattooed marks on Kitkagens; the *skamson* or *skamsquin* on his back, the *noo* on front of each thigh, and the *Tl-kam-kostan* on each ankle.

The designs which I have copied and described are but a portion of the whole which were tattooed on the persons of this party; but the limited time they remained did not enable me to make a very extended examination. Enough, however, has been obtained to show that this subject is one of great ethnological value, and if followed up with zeal and intelligence would be certain to produce interesting results.

The method by which I determined with accuracy the meaning of these various carvings and tattoo designs was by natural objects, by alcoholic specimens of frogs and crayfish, by dried specimens, by carvings of bears and seals, and by pictures, and by the mythological drawings of similar objects which I had previously obtained and determined among the Makahs.

The Haidahs, in explaining to me the meaning of their various designs, pointed to the articles I had, and thus proved to me what they meant to represent.

The tattoo marks of the codfish, squid, humming-bird, etc., never could have been determined from any resemblance to those objects, but by having the specimens and pictures before me they could easily point each one out. Nor was I satisfied until I had submitted my drawings to other Indians, and proved by their giving the same names to each, that my first informant had told me correctly. The allegorical meaning, however, will require for determination time and careful study. Indians are very peculiar in giving information relative to their myths and allegories. Even when one is well acquainted with them and has their confidence, much caution is required, and it is useless to attempt to obtain any reliable information unless they are in the humor of imparting it.

I have observed another peculiarity among the Haidahs. They do not seem to have any particular standard style of drawing their figures; consequently, unless a person is familiar enough with the general idea to be conveyed, it would be difficult to determine the meaning either of a carving or drawing, unless the Indian was present to explain what he intended to represent. For instance, Figs. 6 and 10 are drawn by two different Indians, and both represent the frog. The bear, beaver, and Wasko or wolf, are different in the carvings from the tattoo designs, and so of other tattoo figures. Still, there are certain peculiarities which, once known, will enable one readily to determine what the correct meaning is. I have even known the Indians themselves to be at a loss to tell the meaning of a design. I will cite one instance illustrative of this. One of the Haidahs brought me a bone which he had rudely carved to resemble an animal; I pronounced it without hesitation to be a lizard. He said he would leave it with me till the next day, and would then tell me what it was. I showed it to several Indians in the mean time, and they thought as I did, that it was a lizard or newt. Any person on the Atlantic coast would have pronounced it an alligator. After we had exhausted our guessing, the Indian who carved it said it was an otter, and pointed to its teeth which were the only distinguishing features to prove that it was not a lizard or a crocodile.

The carvings of the pillars are thought by many persons to resemble Chinese or

Japanese work, and in order to satisfy myself upon that point, I showed the carvings to a party of very intelligent Japanese who visited Port Townsend several months since. They examined them carefully and critically, and pronounced them entirely unlike anything they had ever seen in their own country. In fact, they seemed as much interested with the specimens as our own people. I have seen similar carvings by the natives of the Feejee Islands, but on the northwest coast they are confined almost exclusively to the Haidahs on Queen Charlotte's Island, and to the Chimseans on the mainland. The carvings I particularly allude to are those representing several figures one above the other, as shown by the sketches and photographs of the carved posts or pillars placed before the entrances to their houses.

The limited time the Haidahs were at Port Townsend did not enable me to ascertain the origin of this system of carving, or of their custom of tattooing their bodies; what little information I did obtain was given with evident reluctance; but, as we became more acquainted and they began to understand what my object was in obtaining information, they became more communicative, and promised me that this present summer (1874) they would again be here and would bring more carvings and would give me all the information I wished.

Plate No. 2, fig. 8, shows a tattoo design of a halibut, and a painting on a buckskin cape representing the thunder bird of the Sitka Indians, worn by a medicine man during his incantations.

The belief in the thunder bird is common with all the tribes of the northwest coast, and is pictured by each tribe according to their fancy. I have traced this allegory from the Chenooks, at the mouth of the Columbia, through all the coast tribes to Sitka. The general idea is the same throughout; it is a belief in a supernatural being of gigantic stature, who resides in the mountains and has a human form. When he wishes for food he covers himself with wings and feathers as one would put on a cloak. Thus accoutred, he sails forth in search of prey. His body is of such enormous size that it darkens the heavens, and the rustling of his wings produces thunder.

The lightning is produced by a fish, like the Hypocampus, which he gets from the ocean and hides among his feathers. When he sees a whale he darts one of these animals down with great velocity, and the lightning is produced by the creature's tongue, which is supposed to be like that of the serpent. This is the general idea of the mythological legend, slightly altered in the narrative by different tribes and differently depicted by various painters.

The Haidahs seem to have the greatest variety of designs, and they seem to be the principal tribe who tattoo themselves to any extent. Where they acquired the practice or from whom it was learned, it will be difficult to determine. This is an interesting ethnological question, and worthy of further investigation.

Among other customs of the Haidahs which I observed is the practice of gambling, which is common among all the North American Indians.

In my paper on the Indians of Cape Flattery, published by the Smithsonian Institution (No. 220), I have given an account of the gambling implements of the Makahs, which consist of circular disks of wood, highly polished and marked on

the edges to designate their value. The Haidahs, instead of disks, use sticks or pieces of wood four or five inches long, and a quarter of an inch thick. These sticks are rounded and beautifully polished. They are made of yew, and each stick has some designating mark upon it. There is one stick entirely colored and one entirely plain. Each player will have a bunch of forty or fifty of these sticks, and each will select either of the plain sticks as his favorite, just as in backgammon or checkers the players select the black or white pieces. The Indian about to play, takes up a handful of these sticks, and, putting them under a quantity of finely-separated cedar bark, which is as fine as tow and kept constantly near him, he divides the pins into two parcels which he wraps up in the bark and passes them rapidly from hand to hand under the tow, and finally moves them round on the ground or mat on which the players are always seated, still wrapped in the fine bark, but not covered by the tow. His opponent watches every move that is made from the very first with the eagerness of a cat, and finally, by a motion of his finger, indicates which of the parcels the winning stick is in. The player, upon such indication, shakes the sticks out of the bark, and with much display and skill throws them one by one into the space between the players till the piece wanted is reached, or else, if it is not there, to show that the game is his. The winner takes one or more sticks from his opponent's pile, and the game is decided when one wins all the sticks of the other.

As neither of the players can see the assortment of the sticks, the game is as fair for one as the other, and is as simple in reality as "odd or even" or any child's game. But the ceremony of manipulation and sorting the sticks under the bark tow gives the game an appearance of as much real importance as some of the skilful combinations of white gamblers.

The tribes north of Vancouver's Island, so far as my observation has extended, use this style of sticks in gambling, while the Selish or Flat-heads use the disks. Some persons have termed this game Odd and Even, and others have designated it Jack Straws: but the game as played by the Haidahs is as I have described it.

Kitkūn, the chief whom I have alluded to, came to my office one day with one of his tribe, and took quite an interest in explaining the game. The two men played slowly at first, the Chief explaining as the game proceeded, till finally they played with their usual earnestness and rapidity, and I found that the game, with its accompaniment of singing and beating time, was quite as exciting and as interesting as any Indian game I ever witnessed. Sometimes the game is played between only two persons, at other times a dozen may be seen seated on each side, particularly when different bands meet. Then the excitement is intense, and the game is kept up day and night without intermission, and some Indians lose everything they possess, and come out of the play stark naked and remain in a state of nudity till some friend gives them a blanket or an old shirt.

It is probable that the Haidahs have other gambling games, but I have seen only this kind, and the game which Kitkūn explained to me was played with a bunch of sticks which I obtained in Sitka, showing that the northern tribes have the same game with sticks, in common, as the Selish or Flat-head Indian tribes have a common game with disks.

The Haidah Indians have another custom which I have not observed among any of the tribes of the northwest coast, with the exception of these people. It is the practice of cremation or burning the bodies of any of their friends who may die while absent from their homes. An instance of this kind came under my observation at Port Townsend, W. T., on Sunday, March 29th, 1874. A large party of men, women, and children, numbering about one hundred and fifty persons, had been encamped for a couple of weeks on the beach. One of the men who had been at work at the saw-mill in Port Discovery, some seven or eight miles distant from Port Townsend, had died there, and his body had been brought around to Port Townsend. On the morning of the day named, the party broke up their camp and moved in slow procession in six large canoes to Point Wilson, near Port Townsend, where a pile of drift logs was formed into a sort of altar and the body placed upon it, and the whole reduced to ashes; the women singing their death songs, amid howlings, beating of tambourines, and other savage displays. When the whole was burned, one old woman gathered the charred bones and placed them in a box, and the whole party left for Victoria, British Columbia, on their way home to Queen Charlotte's Islands.

I asked one of the Indians why they burned the body. He replied that if they buried it in a strange land their enemies would dig it up and make charms with it to destroy the Haidah tribe. This is the only instance of the kind which has come under my own immediate observation, but I have been informed by other persons that they have observed the same practice on other occasions, but I am not prepared to say whether cremation is a general custom among the Haidahs, or only confined to particular cases like the one I have described.

The Haidahs are one of the most interesting tribes I have met with on the northwest coast. Their insular position and the marked difference in their manners and customs from the Indians of the mainland give me reason to think that very interesting and valuable results in ethnology can be had by a thorough investigation among the villages on the islands. Their carved images, their manufactures in wood and stone, and in silver ornaments, and other evidences of their present skill, and the rich stores of material of a former age to be found in the shell heap remains, are matters well worthy of the careful consideration of those who desire to make up a history of the coast tribes of the northwest. British Columbia is, as it were, sandwiched between Alaska and Washington Territory, and a description of the coast Indians from the Columbia River to the Siberian borders, cannot be complete without including the Indians of Vancouver's Island, Queen Charlotte's Islands, and the adjacent mainland.

I am of the opinion that it will be found more economical and attended with better and more satisfactory results, to have such investigations pursued by persons resident on the northwest coast, rather than to entrust them to the very limited visits of scientific expeditions. Investigations of this kind require time and careful study before correct results can be arrived at.

A knowledge of the habits, manners, and customs of the natives, and a general understanding of the language, is of the first importance. The person making the investigation should be his own interpreter, and these requisites can be

attained only by a long residence and observation among these Indians. The impressions of casual travellers are not always reliable, nor are the interpreters who generally accompany scientific expeditions always capable of understanding correctly what they are required to translate.

It is interesting to read the reports and observations of the early voyages of Cook, La Perouse, Portlock and Dixon, Marchand, and others who have visited Queen Charlotte's Island, and see how little they really knew or understood about these natives.

The best account that I have seen, and that is but a meagre one, is in Marchand's Voyage Round the World, performed during the years 1770 '71, '72, in the "Solide," a ship fitted out in France for the purpose of trading on the Northwest coast of America. But Marchand and all the other early voyagers labored under a very great difficulty; they did not understand the language of the natives, and their only means of intercourse was by signs. Hence we find the accounts of the voyages of every nation, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English, full of theories, and scarce any two alike. When the narrators confine themselves to descriptions of things which they saw, such as the dwellings, carvings, canoes, and other manufactures, and the usual appearance of the natives, their accounts generally agree; but when they commence to form hypotheses on imaginary meanings of the things they saw, they are lamentably at fault.

The following description of a house at Cloak Bay, on North Island, the most northerly island of the group, gives a general idea of a Haidah house of the present day. I quote from Marchand:—

"The form of these habitations is that of a regular parallelogram, from forty-five to fifty feet in front, by thirty-five in depth. Six, eight, or ten posts, cut and planted in the ground on each front, form the enclosure of a habitation, and are fastened together by planks ten inches in width, by three or four in thickness, which are solidly joined to the posts by tenons and mortises; the enclosures, six or seven feet high, are surmounted by a roof, a little sloped, the summit of which is raised from ten to twelve feet above the ground. These enclosures and the roofing are faced with planks, each of which is about two feet wide. In the middle of the roof is made a large square opening, which affords, at once, both entrance to the light, and issue to the smoke. There are also a few small windows open on the sides. These houses have two stories, although one only is visible, the second is under ground, or rather its upper part or ceiling is even with the surface of the place in which the posts are driven. It consists of a cellar about five feet in depth, dug in the inside of the habitation, at the distance of six feet from the walls throughout the whole of the circumference. The descent to it is by three or four steps made in the platform of earth which is reserved between the foundations of the walls and the cellar; and these steps of earth well beaten, are cased with planks which prevent the soil from falling in. Beams laid across, and covered with thick planks, form the upper floor of this subterraneous story, which preserves from moisture the upper story, whose floor is on a level with the ground. This cellar is the winter habitation."

The entrance door of their edifices is thus described:—

"This door, the threshold of which is about a foot and a half above the ground, is of an elliptical figure; the great diameter, which is given by the height of the opening, is not more than three feet, and the small diameter, or the breadth, is not more than two. This opening is made in the thickness of a large trunk of a tree which rises perpendicularly in the middle of one of the fronts of the habitation, and occupies the whole of its height; it imitates the form of a gaping human mouth, or rather that of a beast, and it is surmounted by a hooked nose about two feet in length proportioned in point of size to the monstrous face to which it belongs. * * * * Over the door is the figure of a man carved, in a crouching attitude, and above this figure rises a gigantic statue of a man erect, which terminates the sculpture and the decoration of the portal. The head of this statue is dressed with a cap in the form of a sugar-loaf, the height of which is almost equal to that of the figure itself. On the parts of the surface which are not occupied by the capital subjects, are interspersed carved figures of frogs or toads, lizards, and other animals."

This description by Marquand is that of the houses of the present inhabitants. The hooked nose mentioned is the *Skamsquin* or *eagle*; and the sugar-loaf hat is the *Tadn skillik*.

If Marquand had been able to procure the services of a skilled interpreter, he and his officers could have ascertained the true meaning of these emblems as easily as I have done; but not being able to exchange ideas with the natives, they came to their conclusions, and framed their theories by a series of guesses; and as all the early explorers formed their theories of the Indians upon the same lucid basis, it is not to be wondered at that so much of error has found place in all their narratives. It is, however, a source of surprise, that, since the time of those old voyagers, a lapse of nearly a century, no one has attempted to give a description of those islanders, or to explain the simple meaning of their devices. The Queen Charlotte's group presents to-day as fresh a field for the ethnologist and archæologist as if no explorers had ever set foot upon their shores.

Of the extent and nature of these carvings, Marquand adds:—

"These works of sculpture cannot undoubtedly be compared in any respect to the master-pieces of ancient Greece and Rome. But can we avoid being astonished to find them so numerous on an island which is not, perhaps, more than six leagues in circumference, where population is not extensive, and among a nation of hunters?" The writer was alluding to North Island, one of the smallest of the group; and when it is remembered that in every village on every one of the islands of the group these sculptures are quite as abundant, some idea can be formed of the number to be seen on Queen Charlotte's Islands. "Is not our astonishment increased," adds Marquand, "when we consider the progress these people have made in architecture? What instinct, or, rather, what genius, it has required to conceive and execute solidly, without the knowledge of the succors by which mechanism makes up for the weakness of the improved man, those edifices, those heavy frames of buildings of fifty feet in extent by eleven in elevation! Men who choose not to be astonished at anything will say, the beaver also builds his house; yes, but he does not adorn it; nature, however, has given the beaver the instru-

ment necessary for building it; she has certainly placed the man of the forest in the middle of the materials with which to construct his; but he has been under the necessity of creating the varying tools without which he could not employ those materials. A sharp stone, hafted on a branch of a tree, the bone of a quadruped, the bone of one fish, and the rough skin of another, form instruments more fit to exercise patience than to help industry, and which would have been ineffectual in seconding his efforts, if fire which he discovered, and the action of which he learnt to regulate and direct, had not come to the assistance of his genius, and of the art which he executes through the impulse of genius."

When we examine the whole of the operations necessary for constructing and ornamenting one of the edifices which I have just described, when we reflect on this assemblage of useful arts, and of those which are merely agreeable, we are forced to acknowledge that these arts have not taken birth on the small islands where they are cultivated; they come from a greater distance.

Marquand observes that "the distinction between the winter and summer habitations of the Queen Charlotte Islanders, recalls to mind the custom of the Kamtschadales, who have their *balagans* for summer and their *jourts* for winter; the former erected on posts or pillars, twelve or thirteen feet in height, and the latter dug in the ground and covered with a roof: it is even remarked that some of the *balagans* have oval doors."

The country of these Kamtschadales, as we know, is a peninsula of northeastern Asia, and seems to show that this style of houses of northern Asia must have been introduced by immigration at some remote period from that region. In fact everything seems to prove that Asia peopled the northwest coast of America, the buildings, the manners and customs and general appearance of the natives from Vancouver's Island to the Siberian Coast, are very similar, and in certain respects nearly identical.

Marquand thinks, and my own observations certainly verify the theory, "that it is not without the sphere of probability, that the northwest coast should reckon three species of inhabitants; of the first date, the men who might belong originally to the very soil of America, if we adopt the opinion, that this large country had its own men or aborigines, as it has its animals and its plants," a view which is coincided in by Sir Charles Lyell, Agassiz, Forshey, Morton, Squire, and other eminent authorities. This first class of inhabitants I have in this paper termed Selish, or Flat Heads.

The second species are the Asiatics of the north, whose transmigration seems to have been retarded at Queen Charlotte's Islands, and to have stopped at Vancouver's Island; and lastly, and of the third date, the Mexicans, who fled for refuge to the coast after the destruction of their empire, and who peopled the Californias, and wandered north and mingled with the Selish. Marquand says, "that everywhere on the Queen Charlotte's Islands appear the traces of an ancient civilization; everything indicates that the men with whom they had the opportunity of being acquainted have belonged to a great people, who were fond of the agreeable arts, and knew how to multiply the productions of them."

I feel a great confidence that in the shell heap remains to be found on those islands, as well as in the caves and the mausoleums of the dead, may be discovered relics of antiquity which will well repay the archæologist for exploring them; and that on these islands may be discovered those evidences which will form the missing link in the chain of testimony which will add to the history of the origin of the North American Indians, and perhaps enable us to trace with greater certainty those ancient annals which are now hidden in mist and obscurity, and only darkly hinted at in the shadowy legends and mythological lore crooned over by the ancient men and women, and handed down to after generations, who add to every fresh recital an additional sprinkling of the dust of obscurity.

I have already, in my former writings on the Indians of the northwest coast,[1] alluded to the Mexican terminal *tl*, as occurring in the vocabularies of the Chinooks, Chihalis, Quenáiūlt, and Makah Indians of the west coast of Washington Territory, a fact noticed by Anderson—who compiled the vocabulary of the Nootkan language, which is in the Journal of Cook's Third Voyage, and in that of Marquand and others. A reference to my vocabulary of the Makah Indians (Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, 220) will show it to be rich in words having that terminal. Hence the supposition that while the Selish retained their identity as separate and distinct from the Asiatic tribes, they did receive an influx from the hordes of Mexico, and from them obtained words which have become engrafted into their language during a lapse of centuries, just as we can now perceive the use of English words already among those Coast Indians, who for many years have had intercourse with the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the use of certain Russian words among the natives of Alaska, from their intercourse with the traders of the Russian American Fur Company.

But the vocabularies of the early voyagers are not correct. No two of them are alike, a fact which is to be attributed, in part, to there being at that time no recognized standard for spelling Indian words, and in part to the difficulty of understanding the natives. I will illustrate this by a remarkable error. The word Nootka, as it is usually spelled, or Nūtka, as it should be spelled, is not the name of a place or a people; and it is surprising to me how the intelligent persons who, for so long a time, made "Nootka" their head-quarters, and named the tribe Nootka Indians, and even the authors of the treaty (the Nootkan Treaty), between Great Britain and Spain, should not have discovered the error.

The mistake arose in this way. The Indians have a custom of forming a ring, taking hold of each other's hands, and running or dancing in a circle. This is termed "*Nootka*," and was explained to me by a Clyoquot Indian who resides near Nootka, and who could speak English. He said, if you run round your house, or round a canoe, or dance round in a circle, we say "*Nootka*;" and he remarked that, probably the Indians were dancing on the beach at the time the ethnologist of Cook's Expedition was asking the name of the country, or the people; and the Indian, thinking he asked what the people were doing on the beach, said NOOTKA,

[1] "The Northwest Coast, or Three Years in Washington Territory," Harper & Bros., 1857; and "The Indians of Cape Flattery," Smithsonian Institution (220).

and the white people having called the place and people Nootka, the Indians took no pains to undeceive them. This is very common for Indians to do, even with their own names, or the names of their friends. If a stranger, and particularly a white man, makes a mistake in pronouncing or applying an Indian name, they think it a good joke, and wish to perpetuate it. For instance, a white man asked an Indian, "what is your name?" He replied, "*Halo*," which means, I have none. The man thought that was the Indian's name, and always called him Halo. The tribe liked the joke, and to this day this Indian is known among the whites as Halo, and is so called by his tribe.

Numberless instances could be adduced to show this very common custom of the coast Indians, to take no pains to correct mistakes in language, but to consider such errors as good jokes which are to be kept in perpetuity.

This illustration will serve to show how easy and natural it was for the white man to make the mistake; and how very natural it was for the Indians to keep up the error with every succeeding party of white men who visited them. They thought if Captain Cook called the place Nootka, it must be so, whether the Indians called it so or not. The correct name of the place is Mōwatchat, or Bowatchat, which means, the place of the deer, from Bō kwitch, a deer, which word has been changed in the Jargon to Mowitch, a deer. Since the white men have called the place for so many years Nootka, the Indians speak of it to a white man under that name, just as they speak of the towns which have been settled by the whites, as Victoria, or Port Townsend, or Dungeness, but among themselves they invariably call the place and people by their Indian names, and the Nootkans always laugh at the mistake the white man made in naming them and their country after a dance.

I will not, at this time, press further this discussion upon a subject which to perfectly understand will need extended observations to be made upon the spot, and would require an explanation that would carry me beyond the limits to which I purpose to confine myself in this present paper. I trust that it will be sufficient for me to have shown that the subject of the carvings in wood and stone and precious metals, the paintings and tattoo marks of the Haidahs, is one of very great interest, and one which not only never has been properly explained, but never properly understood.

When we reflect on the great number of centuries during which all knowledge of the interior of the Pyramids of Egypt was hidden from the world, until the researches of Belzoni discovered their secret treasures, and until Champollion, by aid of the Rosetta stone, was enabled to decipher their hieroglyphical writings, may we not hope that the knowledge of the ancient history of the natives of the northwest coast, which has so long been an enigma, may be traced out by means of the explanation of the meaning of the symbols such as I have been enabled to discover in part, and have in this paper described?

This very brief memoir, made during the visit of a party of Haidah Indians for a few weeks in Port Townsend, will serve to show what could be effected if the Government would empower some person here, and appropriate sufficient funds to be expended in these ethnological and archæological researches.

Port Townsend is a place peculiarly adapted to the prosecution of these investigations. Its near proximity to Victoria, where hundreds, and sometimes thousands of the northern Indians congregate every spring for purposes of trade, will enable the observer to collect rich stores of material, in addition to what may be obtained here by the same Indians when they visit Puget Sound.

These Indians, heretofore, have disposed of all their curiosities and other products in Victoria before coming to the American side. But I am of the opinion that hereafter they will bring their wares to Port Townsend, having found by the experience of the past summer that they can dispose of all their manufactures here. During the past summer we have had Indians in Port Townsend from Kwe-nai-ült, Kwillehuyte, and Cape Flattery, on the American coast, and from Nittinat, Clyoquot, Nootka, and other tribes on the west coast of Vancouver's Island, as well as the Haidahs, Chimseans, and other tribes north of Vancouver's Island as far as Sitka. A steamship leaves Puget Sound once every month for Sitka, and the United States Revenue vessels of this district make frequent excursions as far north as Behring's Strait. Arrangements could undoubtedly be made by which an authorized person could have conveyance to any point north that it might be desirable to visit, and could remain as long as required.

The field of observation on the northwest coast is very extensive, and cannot be exhausted for many years. It is a field that would yield such rich returns to ethnology, as well as to every other branch of natural science, as would amply repay any outlay that the Government might make. The history of the coast tribes is becoming of more importance every year, and a connected description of the Aleuts and other coast tribes of Alaska, the tribes of Western British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon would not only be interesting, but would be valuable in assisting to solve that perplexing question of the origin of the North American Indian.

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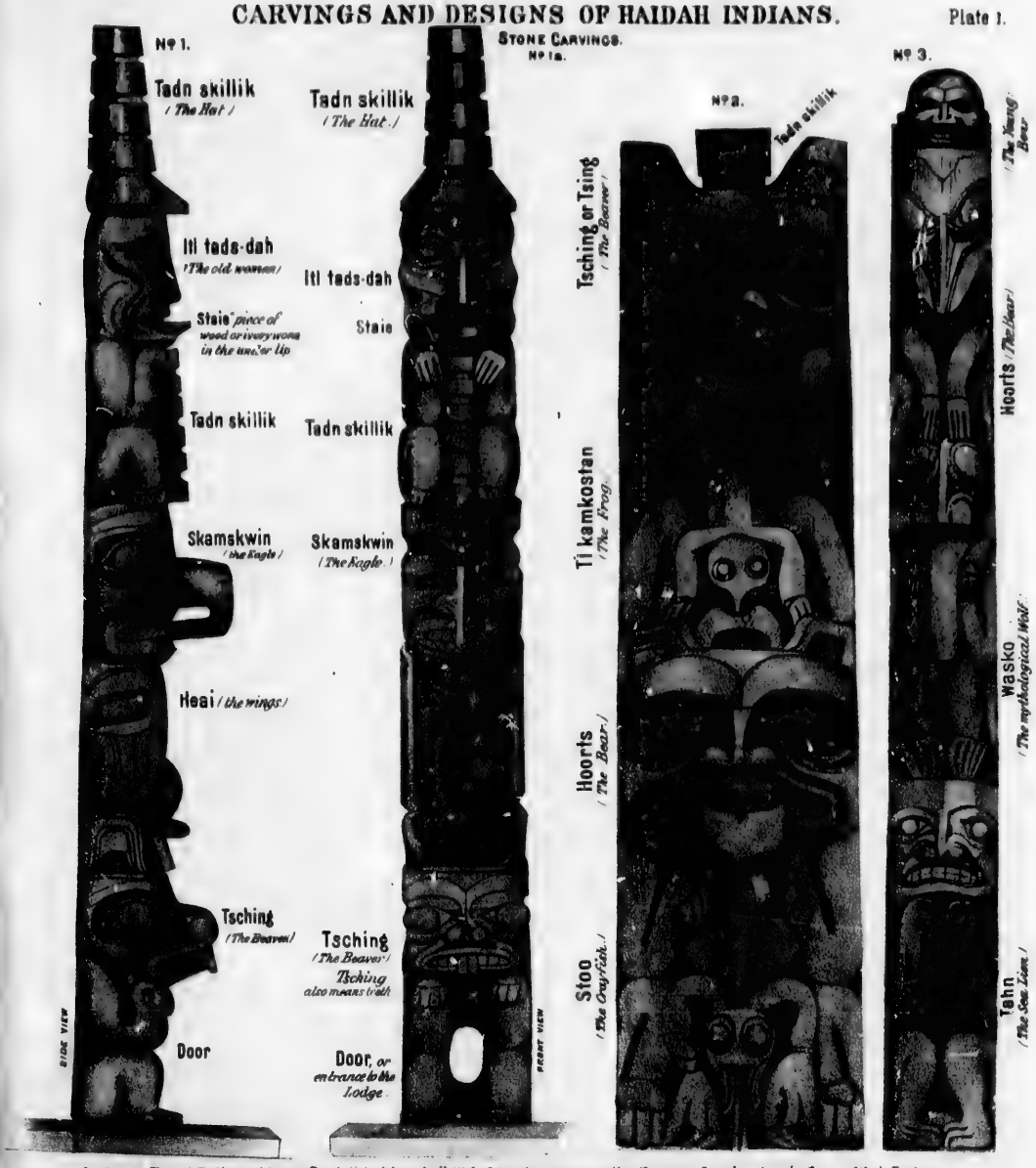
# CARVINGS AND DESIGNS OF HAIDAH INDIANS.

Plate 1.




*Carvings by Haidah Indians of Queen Charlotte's Islands, British Columbia, representing the carved posts set up in front of their Lodges showing the Totems or heraldic design of the families occupying the house. Descriptions given by Kit-kun Chief of the Laskeek village Canaskelos, a brother of Kit-kun & Capt. Skedance Chief of the Koona Village, east coast of Moresby's Island.*
*Drawn by J.G.Swan. Port Townsend. W.T. May 1873.*

# CARVINGS AND DESIGNS OF HAIDAH INDIANS.

WOOD CARVINGS.

No 1.

**Hoorts**
*(The Bear.)*

**Tadn skillik**
*hat worn by Chiefs.*

**Hooyeh** *or*
*Hooyah (the Crow.*

**Koong**
*(The new moon.)*

**Heai**
*(The wings.)*

**Itl tads dah**
*the mother of the Haidah Indians (ancient Legend.*

**Staie** *the piece worn in the underlip*

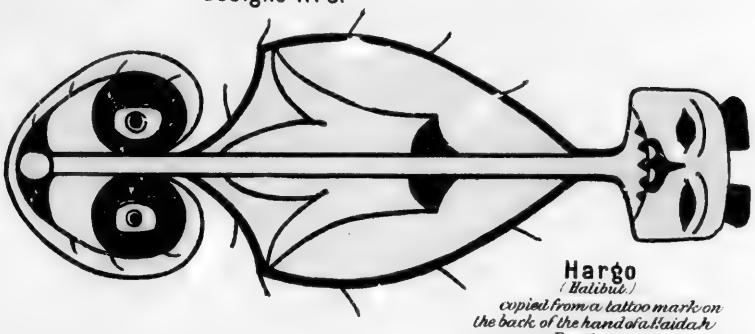
**Keetkie**
*(The young Crow.)*

**Tsching**
*or*
*Wahung the beaver-teeth.*

**Koota**
*(The lip.)*

**Door** *or*
*entrance to the Lodge.*

## Designs No 8.



**Hargo**
*(Halibut.)*
*copied from a tattoo mark on the back of the hand of a Haidah woman at Port Townsend, W.T. June 1873.*

**Whales-head.**

**Hah hake to ak**
*(or lightning fish.)*
*The medicine man puts his head through the centre of the cape and the ends hang down before and behind.*

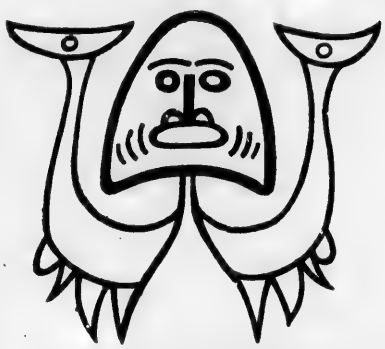
**Buckskin Cape**
*worn by a medicine man Tarkoo Indians Alaska Territory. The Thunder Bird copied from a cape brought from Sitka. J.G. Swan. Port Townsend July 1873.*

Designs. Fig 9.

**Kōōt.**
*(The Fish Eagle.)*

*Painted by Ōeneskels a Haidah Chief and Principal tattoo and painter of the tribe. Painted at Port Townsend, W.T. May 10th 1873.*

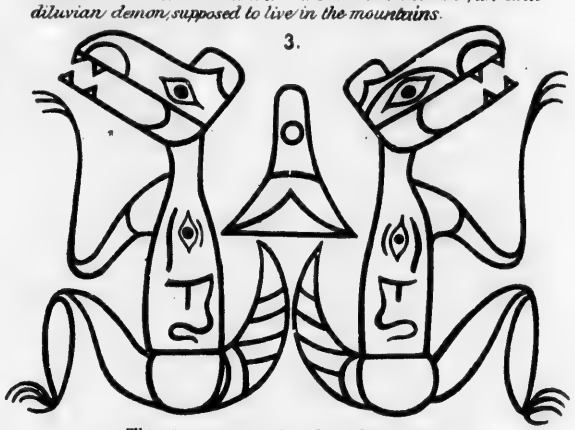
1. Kahatta.
(Codfish.)



Tattoo Mark on the breast of Kitkün one of the Haidah Chiefs, copied from life by J.G. Swan at Port Townsend. May 1873.

Wasko a mythological being of the wolf species similar to the Chu-chu-huu-rl of the Makah Indians, an anti-diluvian demon, supposed to live in the mountains.

3.



This sketch was copied from the tattoo mark on the back of Kitkün, a Haidah Chief, and taken by me in my office, Port Townsend W.T. May 10th 1873.

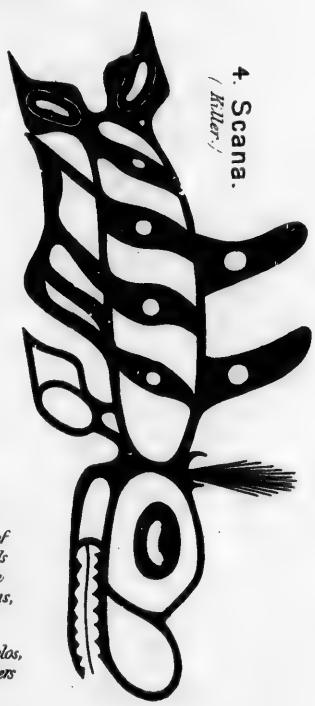
5. Koone.
(Whale.)

2. Oolala.

This is a mythological being of the belief of the Haidah Indians of Queen Charlottes Islands half man and half bird, supposed by them to live on the mountains and to live on whales or Indians, a Skookum or Evil Spirit. It is similar to the Thenkloots or Dukwally of the Makah.

Copied from a drawing made by Geneskelos, brother of Kitkün one of the Carvers and Tattooers of the Haidah tribe, May 1873.

4. Scana.
(Killer.)



# CARVINGS AND DESIGNS OF HAIDAH INDIANS.



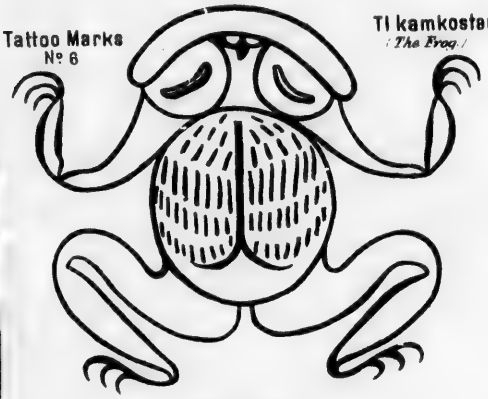
STONE CARVINGS
Nº 5.

Skana
*(The Killer.)*

*(Orca-aber)*

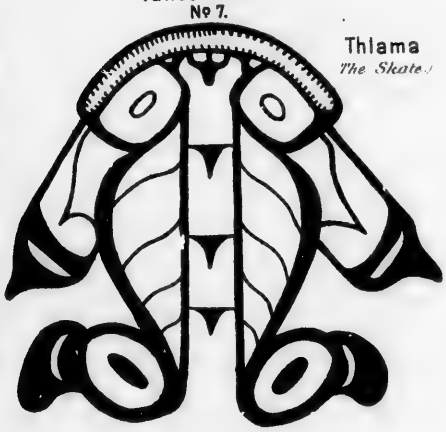
Hoorts
*(The Bear.)*

Tattoo Marks
Nº 6



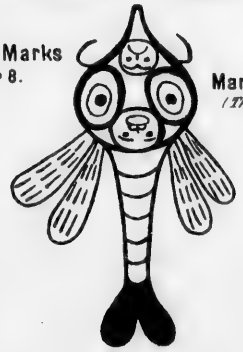
Tl kamkosten
*(The Frog.)*

Tattoo Marks
Nº 7.



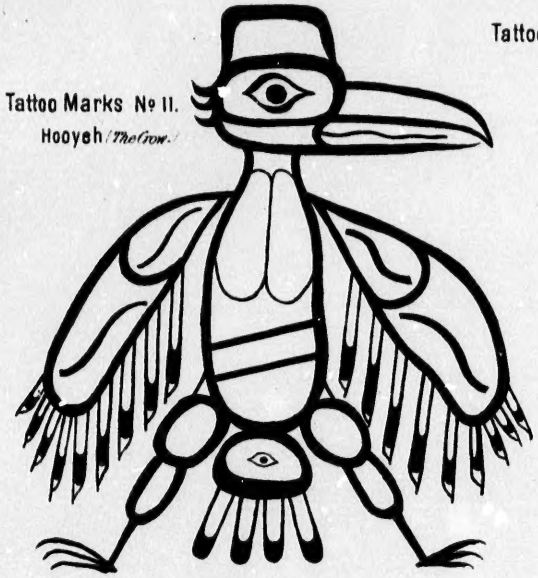
Thlama
*(The Skate.)*

Tattoo Marks
Nº 8.



Mama-Thlontona
*(The Humming Bird.)*

Tattoo Marks Nº 11.
Hooyeh (The Crow.)

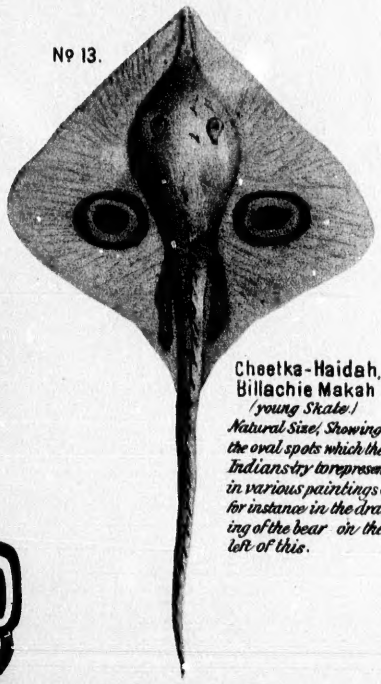


Tattoo Marks Nº 10

Tadn-Skillik.
(The Hat.)

Tchimose a mythological animal residing in the ocean.

Nº 13.

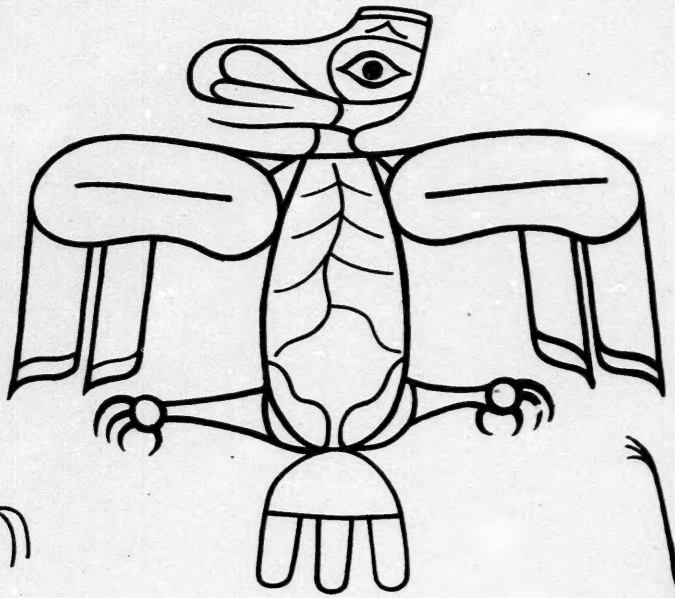


Cheetka-Haidah,
Billachie Makah
(young Skate.)
Natural Size, Showing the oval spots which the Indians try to represent in various paintings as for instance in the drawing of the bear on the left of this.

Tattoo Marks
Nº 12.
Hoorts (The Bear.)

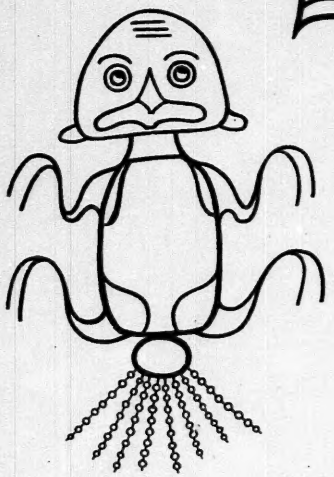
Tattoo Marks № 14. Skam-som.

*(The Thunder Bird.)*

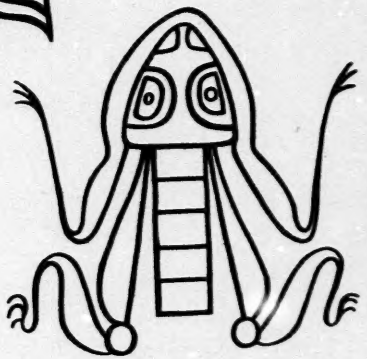


Tattoo Marks № 15. Noo-

*(Squid octopus.)*



Tattoo Marks № 16.
Tl'kám-kos-tan. *(Frog*



*Tattoo marks copied from Kit-ká-gens, an Indian belonging to the Laskeek village of the Haidah tribe Queen Charlotte's Islands.*

*The Skam-som, on his back.*
*Noo, on each thigh.*
*Tl'kám-kos-tan, on each ankle.*

Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge No. 267.